

CAPITAL REPORT: CLOSING THEIR EYES

Crusade, RFE Officials Refuse to Accept Truth

By FULTON LEWIS, JR.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22.—The deeper I delve into the affairs and management of the Crusade for Freedom and Radio Free Europe, the more flabbergasted I become with the attitude of its sponsors and directors.

My own organization is small. Even so, if some stranger were to stop me on the street and tell me that members of my staff were indulging in improprieties and misrepresentations, I would immediately make independent inquiries to determine whether there were any truth to the accusations.

It would seem, then, that the officials and sponsors of these two organizations, confronted with the mass of derogatory information which I as a trained

and experienced reporter, have presented, would have conscientious interest in making their own independent inquiry as to the accuracy of these charges.

The normal expectation is, that, as men of caution and responsibility, jealous of their good names and feeling a sense of duty in the positions they hold, they would be interested in examining the documentation I have at hand. If I were in their position, I would arrange an immediate, independent, unbiased investigation for my own protection.

I not only have not been approached with any request for evidence or documentation; the officers and sponsors of the Crusade and Free Europe will not even sit down with me, at my request, and let me show what I have.

I HAVE BEEN trying since early November to get an appointment with Lt. Gen. Willis Crittenger, president of the Free Europe Committee, and I have yet to be able to do so, even to the extent of talking to him by telephone.

In the course of trying to get information from the Free Eu-

rope Committee, to insure the accuracy of my continuing reports, all inquiries are routed to General Crittenger's office and there they remain. I have yet to receive answers to any of these formal inquiries.

It seems less than becoming on the part of a public welfare operation, which subsists on contributions it solicits from the citizenry at large. It becomes the more so when his organization refuses to make any public financial statement or accounting, has been disapproved by the National Information Agency, the national clearing house for fund-raising operations, and has not even made an annual report of its activities and operations since 1955.

IN THE light of these circum-

stances, the responsibility for the operations and policies of the organizations falls with greater impact than ever on the shoulders of those who have allowed their names to be used to afford it prestige and dignity in the public eye. They are indeed, the insurance for the public that all is well in the operation.

Instead of seeking the truth, however they hide behind a wall of secretaries and executive assistants, and content themselves with the self-justifying "answers" that they are supplied by the accused.

These men are, in effect, trustees. Is this effective trusteeship?

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